



**PUSH  
FOR BETTER**  
Foundation

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

**PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY  
THE PUSH-UP CHALLENGE**



# MENTAL HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA - THE FACTS

⋮ Around 1 million people in Australia live with depression.

⋮ 3,144 Australians lost their lives to suicide in 2021.

⋮ Around 2 million people in Australia live with anxiety.

⋮ Suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians aged 15-44.

⋮ One in five Australians will experience mental ill-health this year and only 45% of people seek help.

**The Push For Better Foundation is here to engage and educate people in mental and physical health, to raise awareness of the mental health issues affecting everyday Australians and encourage actions we can all take for better mental health.**

Launched in October 2020, The Push for Better Foundation aims to have a lasting impact on mental health with efforts focusing on the prevention and early intervention of depression, anxiety and suicide.

Our flagship event is The Push-Up Challenge – a fitness-based mental health event in Australia. Held every year, The Push-Up Challenge helps put a spotlight on the number of lives lost to suicide and is a way to encourage physical health, connection and conversation, and education and awareness about mental health.

In 2023, The Push-Up Challenge participants completed 3,144 push-ups over 23 days in June, representing the number of lives lost to suicide in 2021.

## VISION

To have a lasting impact on mental health





# OUR FOUNDATIONS

**By delivering on our key foundations of education, connection, and health and wellbeing, we will push for – and achieve – a lasting impact on mental health in Australia.**

## Education

Increase mental health literacy, including raising awareness and understanding, reducing the stigma associated with mental health, and encouraging people to seek help when they need it.

## Connection

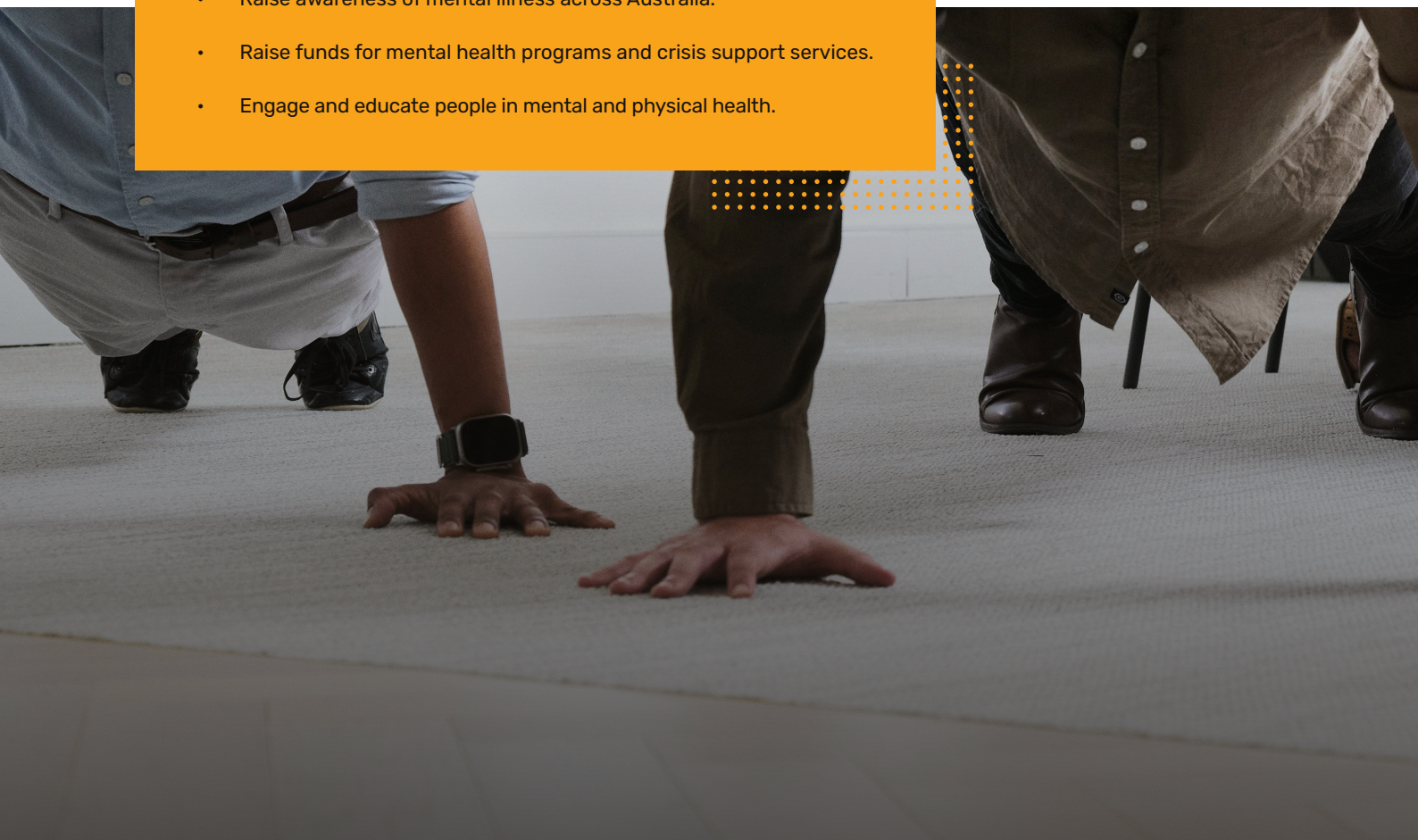
Bring people and communities together, spark conversations about mental health and use digital platforms to connect individuals with their goals.

## Health & Wellbeing

Promoting lifelong mentally and physically healthy habits through an annual physical challenge, daily exercise, which studies show directly impacts mental wellbeing, and raising funds for mental health.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Raise awareness of mental illness across Australia.
- Raise funds for mental health programs and crisis support services.
- Engage and educate people in mental and physical health.



# A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON AND CEO NICK HUDSON



**The last few years have brought many challenges for Australians and this last year was no exception. It's no surprise that the increased cost of living has taken its toll on the mental wellbeing of many - consequently, the growing need for mental health and crisis support can't be ignored.**

The need for connection, conversations around mental health, and reducing the stigma associated with seeking help, has never been needed more. I'm humbled to see the 215,000 of you who joined us to do just that in The Push-Up Challenge in 2023, as we collectively pushed for better mental health.

Thanks to the efforts of our participants, donors and supporters, we raised over \$14.7million for mental health charities including Lifeline Australia, Movember and our own The Push for Better Foundation.

The Push for Better Foundation is achieving exactly what it set out to do - we're putting mental health on the map and encouraging Australians to think as much about their mental health as they would their physical health.

This year, we've helped make a difference to the mindset of many - 98% of our surveyed participants told us The Push-Up Challenge helped to destigmatise mental illness, whilst 96% took away learnings that increased their mental health knowledge. Importantly, connection was key for many; with 93% saying they felt connected to others through workplaces, schools, friends and family.

Our goal to promote lifelong mentally healthy habits is clearly taking shape, when I look at how far our Student Ambassador program has come in the last year. The growing mental health crisis affecting Australian youth is taking a big toll on many families, schools and communities. With young people less likely than any other age group to seek professional help; reducing stigma and other barriers to help-seeking so students think more proactively about their mental wellbeing, is a vital step.

Our Student Ambassador Program supports schools to encourage conversation and help de-stigmatise mental illness. I'm so proud of the growth of this program - we started out with 17 amazing Ambassadors in 2021 and have grown exponentially to an incredible 492 Student Ambassadors joining us in 2023 to lead their classmates and teachers in the push for better mental health through The Push-Up Challenge.

We may have achieved so much, but we've still got a long way to go. We're here to keep pushing for Australia to be a country where mental health is just as important as physical health. We can't do it without the hundreds of thousands of participants who join us every year and I certainly can't do it without the team that make up The Push-Up Challenge, who work behind the scenes every day to keep the event running smoothly. Thank you.

Until next year, let's keep pushing for a more mentally and physically healthy Australia for everyone.

**Nick Hudson,**  
Chairperson & CEO





# OUR BOARD



## NICK HUDSON

### Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer

With a background in engineering plus a Master of Business Administration, Nick brings his talent for delivering strategy and bringing start-ups to life as the founder of The Push-Up Challenge. Nick leads a small but mighty team and is a constant inspiration to others with his unwavering passion for raising awareness about mental health and suicide prevention. He was recently awarded Australian of the Year WA Local Hero for 2024 and Mental Health Advocate of the Year WA, and with his own lived experience of mental health challenges, Nick is the embodiment of how connecting with others, valuing physical and mental wellbeing and a bit of competitive banter for good measure, can lead to better mental health outcomes for all Australians.



## PERAN BISHOP

### Non-Executive Director

Peran has been on board with The Push-Up Challenge since day dot and has strong experience in systems, sales, product development and marketing. Peran is all about giving back to his community and is well known for volunteering with many grassroots organisations. Recently recognised as Club Person of the Year at his surf lifesaving club, Peran believes in the power of connection and physical wellbeing in bringing people together.



## BRENTON LAWS

### Non-Executive Director

A leader in innovation and business development, Brenton has a proven track record in finance, economics, strategy and commercial development. With a Masters of Business Administration and as a member of the Australian Institute of Directors, Brenton knows that quality governance can help shape better communities and outcomes for everyone. Brenton is currently heading up the Innovation and Development team at Western Power and continues to contribute to other NFP organisations with his financial skills.



## HEATHER MCINTYRE

### Non-Executive Director

A lawyer with a history in private practice, oil and gas, not for profit and government sectors, Heather brings her knack for detail, problem solving and advocacy to our Board. As a long-term volunteer with a number of charities including Red Cross, Ronald McDonald House and The Humanitarian Group, Heather firmly believes in sharing her skills and contributing to the communities that need help the most. Spending time as President of the not-for-profit organisation, Leading Youth Forward, Heather knows first-hand the importance of mentoring at-risk teens and how a positive presence can lead to better mental health outcomes.

# THE IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH ACROSS AUSTRALIA IN 2023

Our impact on mental health across Australia in 2023 is clear. Participants reported improvement in their health and wellbeing as a direct result of The Push-Up Challenge.

## Wellbeing (physical and mental)



Felt fitter and stronger

99%



Mood was improved

96%



Were motivated to exercise

98%

## Learning



Learnt about mental health

96%



Mental illness was destigmatised

98%

## Connecting with others



Felt connected

93%



Checked in on someone

55%



Had mental health conversations

88%



Felt it made seeking help easier

97%





# OUR FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE THE PUSH-UP CHALLENGE

The Push-Up Challenge 2023 allowed us to deliver on our three key foundations of education, connection, and health and wellbeing. We brought over 215,000 people together to actively improve their mental health.

## FUNDS RAISED BY THE PUSH-UP CHALLENGE IN 2023 ARE BEING USED TO:

- Raise awareness, engage and educate people in mental health through running The Push-Up Challenge;
- Ensure the Foundation can continue to operate and run The Push-Up Challenge in future years;
- Equip Student Ambassadors across Australia with the tools and resources needed to encourage their schools and community to get fit and learn about mental health by joining in The Push-Up Challenge; and
- Fund new initiatives to address existing gaps in mental health promotion and service provision.







# STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

**The Student Ambassador Program is helping students across Australia focus on their mental wellbeing, reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and building confidence to talk about mental health with their mates and the community.**

Given that suicide continues to be the leading cause of death for young Australians, paving the way for change in this area is crucial.

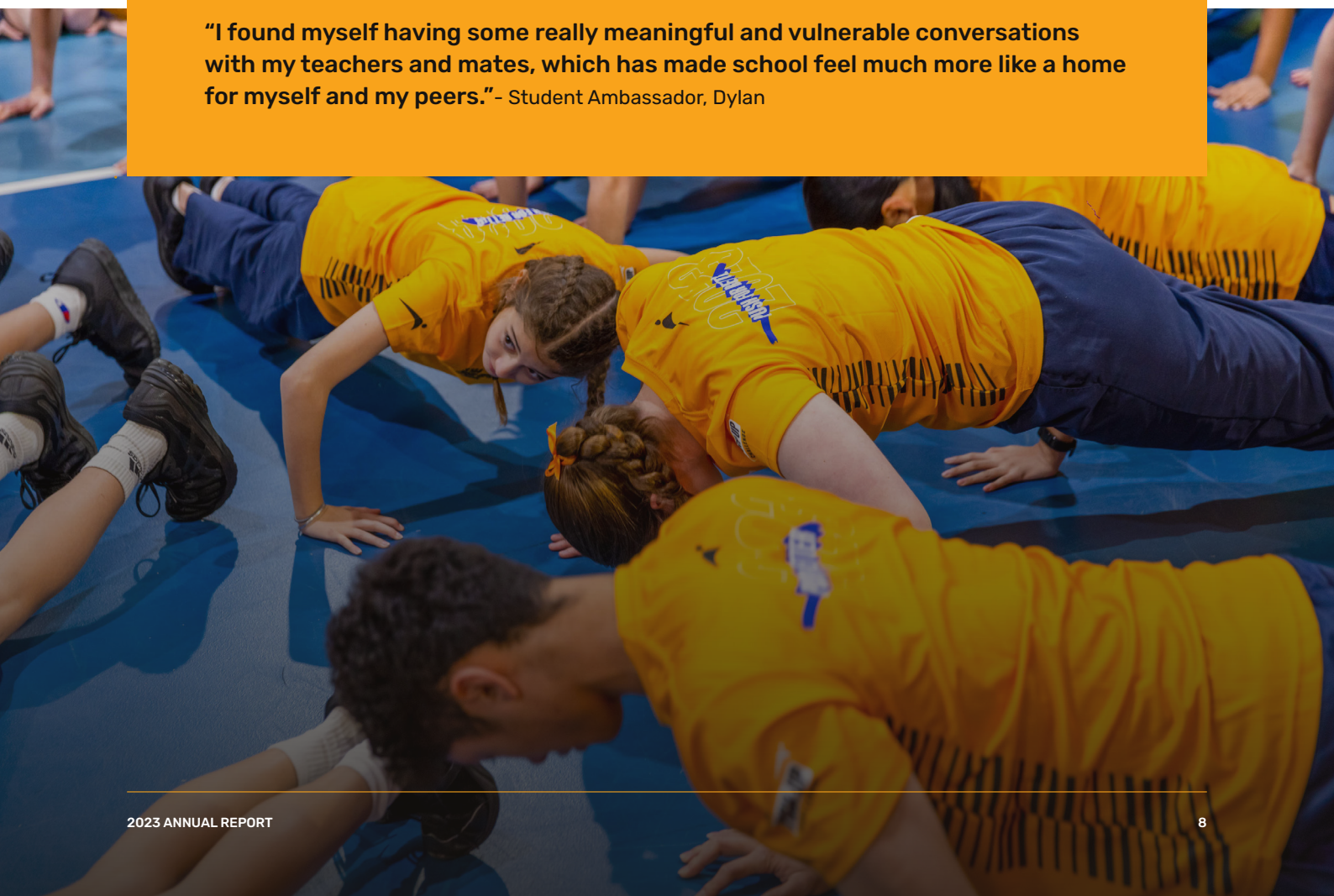
Funds raised through The Push-Up Challenge allowed us to equip almost 500 Student Ambassadors across Australia this year with the tools and resources needed to be leaders in their schools and local community by encouraging others to get fit, connect and learn about mental health by joining in The Push-Up Challenge.

The Student Ambassador Program gives Year 10, 11 and 12 students across Australia an opportunity to lead the push for better mental health at their school. Student Ambassadors attend mental health awareness training - designed to increase knowledge around mental health, boost confidence in talking about mental health with their peers and equip students with skills in how to check in and support those who may be experiencing a mental health challenge.

Bringing together students from across Australia, our Student Ambassador Program is committed to mental health initiatives that can help build mental resilience and result in better long-term outcomes for young people and their mental wellbeing.



**“I found myself having some really meaningful and vulnerable conversations with my teachers and mates, which has made school feel much more like a home for myself and my peers.”- Student Ambassador, Dylan**







# WORKPLACES

## Prioritising the mental and physical health of employees across Australia is becoming more and more important for employers.

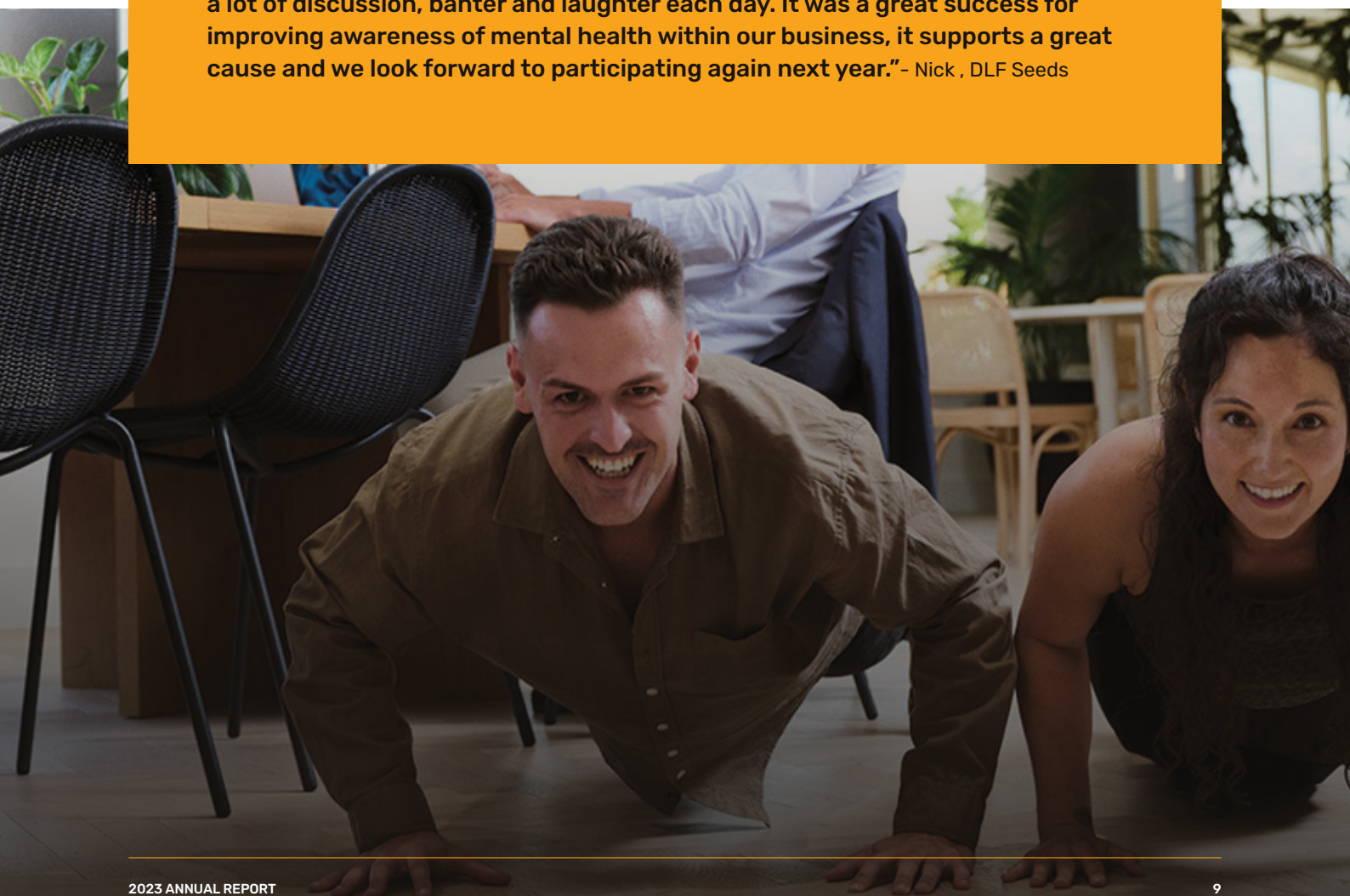
Supporting a workplace culture that values mental health just as much as physical health and safety is key to creating workplaces that help employees feel connected, safe and able to thrive in life, work and relationships.

This year, over 7,400 workplace teams from across Australia's participating industries and sectors including healthcare, technology, government, first responders, finance, construction, mining and more joined in The Push-Up Challenge. Many employees taking part reported improvements in their health and wellbeing as a direct result of participating in the challenge. 87% of participants also told us that The Push-Up Challenge was better than other workplace health promotion activities they've been part of.

⋮⋮⋮ A recent study involving **1.24 million** people found that people who  
⋮⋮⋮ participate in exercise have less days of poor mental health per month.



**"We had numerous teams participate across all ages and fitness levels. It created a lot of discussion, banter and laughter each day. It was a great success for improving awareness of mental health within our business, it supports a great cause and we look forward to participating again next year."** - Nick , DLF Seeds





# EVENT BENEFICIARIES



Every 30 seconds, a person in Australia reaches out to Lifeline for help. Lifeline has been connecting with Australians in need through crisis support and suicide prevention services for 60 years. With 43 centres across Australia, 10,000 volunteers including 4,500 Crisis Supporters and 1,000 employees, Lifeline ensures that no person in Australia has to face their darkest moments alone.

Lifeline is available 24 hours a day to listen without judgement to any person in Australia who is feeling overwhelmed, experiencing crisis or longs to be heard. Funds raised through this year's The Push-Up Challenge play a vital role in the delivery of face-to-face and digital suicide prevention and crisis support services at a time when they have never been needed more. This helps to ensure Lifeline's critical support services are accessible to anyone who needs them – anytime, anywhere. Lifeline centres also deliver accredited education and training programs focusing on suicide awareness and prevention as well as community-based suicide prevention initiatives, including support services for those impacted by suicide.

The Push For Better Foundation is proud to support Lifeline for a third year and in doing so, helping meet the demand for crisis support and suicide prevention services. Fundraising support from The Push-Up Challenge participants over the last three years has allowed Lifeline to have over 376,000 conversations with people in crisis, deliver more than 1,600 emergency interventions and create over 18,000 safety plans to help people stay safe when they are overwhelmed and having thoughts of suicide.



Movember is the leading charity changing the face of men's health on a global scale, focusing on mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer. The charity raises funds to deliver innovative, breakthrough research and programs that enable men to live healthier and longer lives. Committed to disrupting the status quo, millions have joined the movement, helping fund over 1,320 projects around the world.

In addition to tackling key health issues faced by men, Movember is working to encourage men to stay healthy in all areas of their life, with a focus on men staying socially connected and becoming more open to discussing their health and significant moments in their lives.

Partnering with Movember for the second time, The Push For Better Foundation is proud to be supporting initiatives and programs that will help deliver life-saving men's mental health and suicide prevention tools to stop men dying too young. The commitment and fundraising efforts of The Push Up Challenge help Movember develop more targeted mental health and suicide prevention programs, like Men in Mind.

Men in Mind is a first-of-its-kind comprehensive and evidence-based training course for practitioners who counsel men. With statistics showing that 50% of men who die by suicide have been in contact with mental health services prior to their death, the program aims to upskill therapists and help them engage men in therapy more effectively; giving them tools and strategies to identify and respond to, depression and suicidality.





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[www.thepushupchallenge.com.au](http://www.thepushupchallenge.com.au)

